Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

1. (Currently amended) ~~A~~ An exposed, thermally processed photothermographic material comprising:

a support having hereon one or more thermally-developed imaging layers which have been exposed and thermally developed ~~are developable~~ to produce an image ~~when the photothermographic material is thermally processed~~, the photothermographic material having an inherent Dmin and Dmax optical density after exposure and thermal processing, wherein Dmin is defined as image density achieved when the photothermographic material is thermally developed without prior exposure to radiation and Dmax is defined as a maximum image density achieved when the photothermographic material is exposed to a particular radiation source and then thermally developed; and

an exposed, thermally developed area which is disposed along a length of at least one edge of the photothermographic material, and which, ~~when exposed and thermally processed by a thermal processor,~~ has an optical density less than the Dmax and greater than the Dmin of the photothermographic material.

2. (Original) The photothermographic material of Claim 1, wherein the area is spaced from the at least one edge by at least about 0.1mm.

3. (Original) The photothermographic material of Claim 1, wherein the area is spaced from the at least one edge by less than about 0.5mm.

4. (Original) The photothermographic material of Claim 1, wherein the area extends from the at least one edge by no more than about 25mm.

5. (Currently amended) The photothermographic material of Claim 1, wherein the area comprises a uniform optical density ~~after thermal processing~~ of between about 20 percent and about 80 percent of the Dmax of the photothermographic material.

6. (Currently amended) The photothermographic material of Claim 1, wherein the area has been exposed to provide a uniform optical density ~~after thermal processing~~ of between about 1.2 OD to about 2.5 OD.

7. (Original) The photothermographic material of Claim 1, wherein the photothermographic material is adapted to be thermally processed using a thermal processor, and the photothermographic material is presented to the thermal processor along the at least one edge such that the at least one edge is a leading edge when transported through the thermal processor.

8. (Original) The photothermographic material of Claim 1, wherein the thermally-developable imaging layers comprise a binder in a reactive association, a photosensitive silver halide, a non-photosensitive source of reducible silver ions, and a reducing composition for the reducible silver ions.

9. (Currently amended) The photothermographic material of Claim 1, wherein the area ~~after thermal processing~~ comprises a half-tone style image.

10. (Currently amended) The photothermographic material of Claim 1, wherein the area ~~after thermal processing~~ is comprised of a plurality of dots of Dmin and Dmax.

11. (Currently amended) The photothermographic material of Claim 1, wherein the area ~~after thermal processing~~ comprises a non-uniform gradient optical density.

12. (Original) The photothermographic material of Claim 1, further comprises a protective overcoat, wherein the protective overcoat is comprised of at least a binder and an isocyanate compound, and wherein the amount of isocyanate compound in the protective overcoat is at least about 5% by weight of the binder.

13. (Original) The photothermographic material of Claim 1, wherein at least one the thermally-developable imaging layers comprises a binder and an isocyanate compound, and wherein the amount of isocyanate compound in the imaging layer is at least about 2% by weight of the imaging layer binder.

14. (Original) The photothermographic material of Claim 1, further comprises a protective overcoat, wherein the protective overcoat is comprised of at least a mixture of two or more binders, and wherein at least one of the overcoat binders is an acrylic or methacrylic acid ester polymer and is present in an amount of at least about 5% of the total overcoat binder.

15. (Original) The photothermographic material of Claim 14, wherein the acrylic or methacrylic acid ester polymer is poly-methylmethacrylate.

16. (Withdrawn) A method of thermally processing a photothermographic material comprising a support having hereon one or more thermally-developable imaging layers, the method comprising the steps of:

exposing an area along at least one edge of the photothermographic material such that, when thermally processed by a thermal processor, the image density of the area will be less than a Dmax and greater than a Dmin of the photothermographic material; and

providing means to transport the photothermographic material to the thermal processor such that the edge is first transported through the thermal processor.

17. (Withdrawn) A method of forming a visible image, the method comprising the steps of:

exposing a first area of a photothermographic material to form a latent image, the photothermographic material comprising a support having hereon one or more thermally-developable imaging layers which are developed when the photothermographic material is thermally processed;

exposing a second area, different than the first area, of the photothermographic material disposed along a leading edge of the photothermographic material such that, when developed, the second area has an image density less that the Dmax and greater than the Dmin of the photothermographic material;

transporting the photothermographic material to a thermal processor such that the leading edge first contacts the thermal processor; and

thermally processing the first and second areas to develop the visible image.

18. (Withdrawn) The method of Claim 17, further comprising the steps of:

exposing a third area, different from the first and second areas, of the photothermographic material disposed along a side edge of the photothermographic material such that, when developed, the third area has an image density of about Dmax of the photothermographic material; and

thermally processing the first, second, and third areas to develop the visible image.